

REMARKS

On the relief afforded by the Science, and application of the Element of Electricity to the Human Frame, in the Cure of Diseases, where Medicine itself is paralyzed; and old Theories, now refuted, are found to be useless and unavailing.

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PRICE 4d.

Printed and published as the Act directs, and entered at Stationers' Hall.

The Octavo Size will be ready for delivery in a few days.

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A TRIFLE;

OR,

THE SCIENCE OF ELECTRICITY DEVELOPED IN
A FEW WORDS.

“ He may be said to live, and to enjoy the functions of his soul, who, engaged in a laudable pursuit, endeavours to distinguish himself, as the friend of mankind; or, by the acquisition of fame in some liberal art.”

SALLUST.

“ Some time hence, ELECTRICITY will, probably, be considered as the great Vivifying Principle, by which NATURE carries on most of her operations. It is a FIFTH ELEMENT; distinct from, and superior to, the other four, which only comprise the material part. But this SUBTILE, this ACTIVE FLUID, is *a kind of Soul*, that pervades, and quickens, every particle of matter.

BRYDONE.

MR. ADAMS, from the acknowledged inadequacy of medicine, taken into the stomach, to effect cures of all diseases, is extremely desirous of laying the foundation of a sound and complete system of Therapeuticks; whereby a specific remedy, or nearly so, may be found for each respective malady incidental to the human frame.

Such being Mr. Adams's views, he begs respectfully, but earnestly, to call the attention of the Nobleman, the Gentleman, the Public, and persons who unite with those terms the sacred epithet, of friend in the cause of humanity, truth, and science, to assist him in endeavouring to rescue the medical art from the obloquy under which, by the uncertainty of the effects of medicine, as unfortunately for the Faculty as for the community at large, it now labours; and to place that art, with its professors, on higher ground than they at present command, or can ever expect to attain according to the existing principles of the *materia-medica*, as laid down by the College of Physicians.¹

¹ A fact, that will be found, perhaps, more convincing than any argument which Mr. Adams could adduce, in regard to rendering the combination of electricity with that of medicine imperative, is, that a medical friend who has followed the two professions of surgery and medicine for fifty years, greatly to his credit as a man, and as a practitioner in those arts, and who is still alive to corroborate these statements, viewing the principle on which the medico-electrical bath was constructed, and having ascertained its efficacy in several cases, stated, that

Without, in the smallest degree, wishing to devote the laws or regulations promulgated by the respectable body just named to censure or sarcasm, Mr. Adams may, perhaps, be permitted to say, that their code is deficient in the first and most essential material requisite for the long preservation of life and health; beginning, in a manner, at the point where it should end: an error that will, in these enlightened days, ere long correct itself. For if Mr. Adams were to enumerate the disorders, for instance, produced merely by obstructions and suppressions in the vascular and glandulous systems; in the inert and defective

he had always thought there must be another leading power, or agent, besides that of medicine, which would enable the faculty to act with *less uncertainty*, and *more real effect*, in the cure of diseases, than had hitherto been discovered; that he now saw he was right in his conclusion, and felt convinced that it was the element of electricity, combined with, and rarefying, the common atmosphere, as retained and inhaled in the bath which Mr. Adams had invented; and he did not doubt that it would remove that insurmountable barrier to perfection, the limited nature and effect of medicine in the curative art, that had for so many centuries existed.

circulation of the blood and finer fluids ; in the chilled insensible cuticular evacuations, &c.; commencing with *the impaired nervous fluid* (styled nervous debility); the undue action of that fluid in the nerves of the marrow, of the brain, and spine; proceeding to other great organs of our nature, and principles of vitality; as the lungs, the heart, the liver, the kidneys, the volition of the mind, muscular motion, &c. to the feet, whereon, by the existing harmony and equilibrium preserved in the human frame, that great and complicated work of the wisdom of the Creator, after whose image we are formed, and like him, in due distinction from every other being, we are enabled (though generally we know not why) to maintain ourselves in an erect position : were Mr. Adams even to glance at the disorders generated, he repeats, by obstructions, they would be found to constitute nine tenths of the present diseases, and alone to fill a volume of no small extent ; all of which Electricity will relieve, if resorted to in an early stage of the complaint.²

² The medical gentleman, before alluded to, one day brought to Mr. Adams, in his carriage, a young

Mr. Adams will be plain; and he speaks confidently: it is not the province,

lady, about seventeen years of age. Her right knee (from spasms) had become contracted, which, itself, had also produced another serious complaint: in the endeavour to cure these, the usual means were adopted, as employed by the medical art, for three or more weeks, without success.—Mr. Adams, on his honour, affirms, that in one electrification only, the influence of the medico-electrical bath, together with the practice which he has marked out, and undeviatingly and successfully administers, eradicated both complaints; it further cleared the way, by removing other obstructions, to the passing of several gall-stones; and she is now restored to perfect health.

Another remarkable instance may be adduced, of the effects of electricity in cases of obstructions. The elbow-joint of the right arm of a child, two years and a half old, had been contracted, to an angle of about fifty degrees, for a year and a half, which had resisted all medical application for that period. The heads of the bones were considerably enlarged, and the infant cried on touching the arm. On the second day Mr. A. discovered that scrofula had formed in, and obstructed the motion of, the joint. The bones soon became reduced by the application of electricity, and the scrofulous humour was thereby propelled to, and actually exuded from, the ends of the fingers; the nails, also, of that hand

nor in the nature of the ingredient of medicine, aided even by the most consummate skill of the medical practitioner, to afford effectual relief in most of the cases (numberless as they are) produced by obstructions: they being the predisposing causes of complaints generally, Electricity should in the earliest stage of the disease be administered. Some of the most important are,—Asthma, Apoplexy, Consumption, Epilepsy, Dropsy, Palsy, Scrofula, &c. Thus it is, from that course not being adopted by the faculty, that we see the invalid struggling under his afflictive burthen, perhaps, for a long series of years, because incurable by medicine, until released or called hence by an all-merciful edict of Providence.

It will be obvious to every one, that drugs are not of so highly rarefied and subtile a quality, as to have the power of pervading, like Electricity, the minutest vessels of the lungs with a swift-

came off: thus the great desideratum, the free action of the elbow, was in about three weeks obtained; which previously, and unsuccessfully, by the practice of medicine, had occupied one year and a half, and cost the parents £100.

ness more rapid than light ; nor are medicaments in the least calculated to reach those fine pieces of mechanism contrived and executed by the Divine Operator to be receptacles and reservoirs of air, by which the heart itself is ventilated and refreshed, except, indeed, by a very distant and most circuitous route through the circulation of the blood ; during which process, it will be admitted, all medicinal effects must have vanished : yet thus have we been amused for centuries.³

³ To prove the indispensable necessity, that exists, of the science of electricity taking the lead in the establishment of an effectual system of therapeuticks, Mr. Adams is of opinion he need only mention the following case. A gentleman was grievously afflicted with asthma, which for sixteen years had baffled the efforts of the medical art. Mr. Adams solemnly declares, with the voice of truth, and in the presence of the Almighty, that by electricity he was relieved in an instant. At first, he was nearly twenty minutes ascending one flight of stairs, gasping as it were for life at every step ; but was no sooner seated in the electrical bath than he cried out, " It is gone !" meaning that the asthma had ceased ; and said, " I can breathe as freely as you

Medicine, assuredly, is quite unequal to the colossal task of communicating to the entire system, as the atmosphere, or element of electricity, does, that nicely-regulated and genial temperature, *animal heat*, so imperiously necessary to preserve the liquids contained in the human frame in a proper state of fluidity, and no more; nor is it capable of making good an exhaustion or deficiency of, perhaps, the most wonderful part (if one part be more so than another) of our structure, the nervous fluid. Here Mr. Adams cannot pass over the terms, “nervous debility,” and “increased sensibility of the nerves,” &c. so indefinite, yet so often brought into use, and made to account for a long list of diseases:—they are expressions fraught with sound, but, like “puny, or sickly intellect,”⁴ are devoid of interest or meaning, and have little

can.” On which observation, he sprang from the bath, more than a foot from the ground, with all the agility of a person in the fullest health. Many instances have occurred of a similar nature.

⁴ Why not give the disease a candid designation, a cause, and cure; as, a depressed or reduced energy of the mental powers, or the like; caused by pressure on the mouths or valves of the nerves, the ven-

or no relation to the maladies attempted to be defined by such vague and powerless denominations.

Mr. Adams is aware, that the limits of this paper will not admit of his dilating to the extent he could wish; he will, therefore, proceed at once to illustrate a point that *no one* to this period appears to have attempted; probably from the very imperfect manner in which the subject is understood; viz. *the native state and properties of the nerves, and the fluid which they contain.*

The energy inherent in the aërial fluid that passes through the nerves (not the nerves themselves) is *the main spring* that gives soul; the want of *that energy* is a declension or a decreasing of elasticity, a depression which arrests the continuation of muscular motion, produces

tricles and vicine parts of the brain; thus influencing and debasing or vitiating the nervous fluid, constitutive of the mind? The cure must be above the power of medicine, which, if possibly accomplishable, will be effected by electricity, as administered by Mr. Adams; he, therefore, invites the parties so afflicted to a fair trial and perseverance in the administration of that supernatural element.

a prostration of strength, and generates a complication of disorders : these, however, will not admit of the definition, “nervous debility ;” they originate in a loss of the animal heat, which should be imparted to the system, in a reduction or diminution of *the ethereal temperature* that permeates, that governs and regulates not only the nervous fluid, but the liquids, generally, with which the human structure abounds.

It is this energising fluid, which pervades the nerves, that preserves the equilibrium of our nature, that constitutes and maintains the union between the mind and the body. To unfold, to expose to our view, to reveal, *the secret* relative to this grand, this wonderful compound, Mr. Adams declares it to be his opinion, from the ideas he possesses of the human edifice, that the nervous fluid is, *the highly rarefied and subtile element of Electricity, etherealised* ; which is a modification of fire, designated vital or animal heat ; whereby the nervous fluid, as *the primum mobile*, and the fluids of the system, generally, from being closely united with, and wisely appropriated to sustain, the *Solids*, enable

the *latter* in harmonic order to perform, simultaneously, their allotted functions.

The nerves of the brain and spine, being like so many filaments diffused over the whole of the body, serve as channels to convey the nervous fluid through the numerous ramifications that strike off in every direction from the head to the feet,—from the interior to the superficies; which fluid, *by the almighty ordinance of our Creator*, is made to keep pace with, and to accompany, the joint offices of the body, and the volition of the mind; to have possession of, and dominion over, the human frame; to be the Life!—the Soul of Man!

Upon this principle, and this only, can the laws on which centripetal power, or gravitation, acts, hitherto involved in impenetrable darkness, be unambiguously exemplified and elucidated; which Mr. Adams pledges himself to propound, if duly supported, in a subsequent work that he is now preparing.

Diseases of the body impair the stamina of the constitution, and frequently, though not always, affect the nervous fluid; but these are fixed complaints which have their specific denominations,

and cannot in justice to the medical art, nor in deference to discerning public opinion, be foisted upon us as cases of “nervous debility,” hitherto so delineated: but when the animal spirits are depressed, the nervous fluid, or *natural electricity of man, being the ethereal agent* to the brain, and to all parts of the human frame, both mind and body partake alike of the depression;—both become disenergised; a disorganisation of the whole system, more or less, ensues; and the *continuity*, the uninterrupted cohesion, which before united *these essentialities* so necessary to constitute our being, and establish our existence, and, as it were, to bind them together in closer and still closer union, loses its tension; its incomprehensible and indescribable celerity of motion; its natural vigour; the wonted equiponderous state of our nature gives way; and the individual thus afflicted, it will not, *now*, be wondered at, sinks into a state of languid and oppressive disease, nay even dissolution, if not snatched from this peril by judicious, by effectual treatment. Whatever may be the disorders consequent on this derangement of the system, it will

be recollected, that *the predisposing cause*, no matter the distance or lapse of time, is to be found in the depression of the animal spirits: the mode of cure should, therefore, be directed in a manner to remove *that cause*, leaving the local affection for a time. Electricity, as communicated in the medico-electrical Bath, should copiously and repeatedly be administered daily: medicine in such cases being unequal to the required effect of *revivifying the depressed energy of the nervous fluid*; without which, neither health, nor strength, can, as it ought, with undisturbed tranquillity and permanency, be enjoyed. Time, or perseverance in electrification,—change of scene and of air, being the specifics, will generally establish the cure;—for which purpose Mr. Adams has the honour to acquaint the Nobility, and the Public, that he is fitting up apartments at his residence, an airy and capacious dwelling, where the advantages of repeated electrical treatment may be applied daily during the most inclement weather; which benefit the Patient, by living at a distance, might be prevented from, or disappointed in receiving.⁵

Mr. Adams would fain conclude his argument here ; but so many instances of the limited action of medicine, and surprising effects of electricity, crowd on his mind, that it appears incumbent on him to cite another case, or two, in order that the opinion of every one into whose hands this trifle may fall, should be open to conviction thereon.

Salivation, by the deleterious effects of mercurials, produces a certain action upon the liver and kidneys, &c.; but it neither promotes effectual secretion in those glands, nor gives energy to the human structure ; indeed, quite the reverse ; it ends by destroying the constitution, and

ed, where the intellect, taste, smell, and not only the senses, but the speech, and every other animal function, had become vitiated and impaired, accompanied with a general torpor and great bodily infirmity ; such indeed as to induce Mr. Adams to decline undertaking the cure, unless assured by the patient himself, that he would, as it was the only specific for that disease, persevere for three months if found requisite.—To be brief, the gentleman, aged seventy-six years, residing in Berkshire, came to town, was brought regularly to Mr. Adams daily, and cured ; he declared that he had not enjoyed so perfect a state of health, as he then did, for the space of thirty-six years.

sapping the vigour of the rising generation; mercurials, nevertheless, under every form by which they can be administered, the blue pill, &c. is the prevailing practice of the medical art. When, it may be asked, shall we awake from this long night of infatuation and delirium? When shall we call reason, nay, common sense, to our assistance, in order to arm ourselves with resolution sufficient to reject these prejudicial practices? ⁶

⁶ A gentleman, who was cured of a distressing complaint in his arms and legs, arising from too early an immersion into cold water, after severe medical treatment by mercurials, emphatically declared, that Mr. Adams was better entitled to the reward of £15000. than Dr. Jenner, *the physician of the world*, to whom he, of course, acknowledged the greatest possible credit was due; but he rejoined, that to be cured, as he was, of a most inveterate complaint, suffering as he did with pain and languor, in a series of three electrifications only in the bath, could be considered as nothing short of a miracle performed, and which invention and treatment deserved a national reward.—Ultimately, perhaps, it may be so appreciated.

A child, thirteen years old, had lost, through an inexpert operation, the use of her right thumb, which decayed and perished; her arm also became

To conclude : Mr. Adams may be considered bold in stating, that he alone possesses the means of effecting the desiderata that for so many centuries, to this moment, have been sought after in vain; he nevertheless reasserts, not speaking from observation merely, but from irrefutable facts, that he holds the power in his own hands, and dispenses it at will, to the astonishment and satisfaction of the multitude.—*In an instant*, with the combined effect of the element of electricity and the common atmosphere, in

to be quite consumptive. After going from one medical practitioner to another for a year and a half, the child was at length taken to the medical friend of Mr. Adams before alluded to; who, examining the case attentively, and expatiating with the mother on the total impossibility of the art of medicine, or medical applications, to effect a cure, as leeches, blisters, &c. had been applied without effect, and amputation had been repeatedly ordered, &c. told her, that there was only one chance left, which was, Electricity as administered by Mr. Adams. Suffice it to state, the daughter was brought to Mr. A. (having been rejected by another electrician as incurable), and the thumb was restored to its use, and original strength, in one month. Her consumptive appearance became dissipated, and she completely recovered her health.

the medico-electrical, *but Aerial Bath*, his own invention, which should obtain a place in all palaces, in the mansions of the great, and in the houses of the opulent, he has the power of acting upon and pervading the whole system; *the interior by inspiration,*⁷ *the*

⁷ The fact, viz. the inhaling of the atmosphere or element of electricity, and which sets at rest for ever the old and absurd theory, that the person being electrised receives the charge merely on the surface of the body, where it remains in a latent state during the application, Mr. Adams demonstrably proves by the following experiment:—With a double insulation he either suspends from the interior, at the top, or places on the bottom, of the Bath, a brass ball of any given diameter; in a word, it is so arranged, that, if charged at all, the charge must be communicated from the *atmosphere* of the Bath,—the aperture of which, for the convenient entrance of the patient, and reception of the common air of the room, occupies a space of 5 feet, 4 inches, by 2 feet, 6 inches, and is left open during the electrification. The moment the machinery is put in motion, which is done from without, a succession of sparks may be taken from the brass ball.

This experiment will account philosophically for asthma, particularly the humid and spasmodic, being relieved instantaneously, as described in a preceding note; a case which, whilst it leads to an

exterior by contact: thus he possesses the means, with facility, which otherwise would be a work of impossibility to accomplish, of immediately promoting secretion and circulation; of removing asthma, or difficulty of breathing; of inveterate cough, consequently he conceives of consumption; of communicating the genial and precise degree of warmth required; of giving to the heart, by the removal of obstructions, its standard vibratory pulsation, and no more; of supplying the deficiency of the nervous fluid; of restoring the equilibrium of nature, &c. And he asks for support, only to be able to blend his power and practice with those of medicine, that the same may become a science; that it may operate with a given certainty; be held, as it ought, in high estimation; in fine, that it may give universal satisfaction, instead of encouraging discontent, by relieving thousands in the British

important discovery, refutes and falsifies former fastidious opinions; and Mr. Adams, though contrary to his usual custom, may in a few instances admit of the gentleman being referred to, whose asthma disappeared the moment he was seated in the Bath.

empire, and in the civilised world ; such, he means, as are not succoured, or who, perhaps, would fall sacrifices, by the limited capability of medicine (as for instance in consumption),⁸ to long suffering, deep oppression, and finally to premature dissolution.

⁸ Mr. Adams, with the element of electricity, in aid of the medical art, proclaims aloud, that there is no doubt of his being able to cure phthisis pulmonalis, or consumption, and, co-operating with medicine, to eradicate that scourge of the human race from this country in particular, where it has become so prevalent, and, from not being checked, is making daily its increased devastating progress.

A great number of cases might be cited, which Mr. Adams intends shall form a subsequent comprehensive work on the commanding and peculiar properties of Electricity, as treated by him, in Asthma, Spasms, Apoplexy, Epilepsy, Dropsy, Paralysis, Scrofula, St. Vitus's Dance, Rheumatism, Lumbago, Gout, Gutta Serena, Tic Douloureux, Deafness, Deaf and Dumb Cases, &c. &c. which could not, from the brevity of its extent, be introduced herein; yet enough, perhaps, has been developed to establish its fame and superiority over every other agent applied medically, wherever it may obtain a careful perusal, and its almost supernatural effects be attentively considered.

TO THE FACULTY.

Mr. ADAMS begs to assure that respectable community, with a purity of esteem, a just sense of inflexible liberality of sentiment, and breadth of mind, which, he flatters himself, will in the present day be demonstrated and diffused more generally than hitherto evinced, but especially by the distinguished and learned body he addresses, that he has not in the foregoing argument set down aught in malice, or, as has been stated, in vindictiveness: this he loudly disclaims; and would fain be heard to say, that his nature, and known disposition in favour of mutuality of generous feeling, induces him to shrink from, and indignantly to spurn at, the possibility of entertaining such an idea.

Mr. Adams might, indeed, be justified in remonstrating with some medical professors, who may be said perhaps to have thwarted his endeavours, and to have opposed the facts he has collected, and in a few instances promulgated; but this, he informs the collective body, constitutes no portion of his design; nor will he easily be urged to take up the pen in illustration of such disquisition.

His object he avows to be the common cause,—the good of mankind; to live and to be in harmony with the general voice, and the medical department particularly; he therefore seriously and ardently invites the members of the curative art to participate with him in the same gratifications; and liberally to accord in the propriety and justice of his claim; viz. the annexation of the practice of Electricity to the *materia medica*, with a view to the importance of his discovery, while co-operating with medicine, in more effectually promoting the cure of diseases than hitherto, being promulgated throughout this and surrounding nations.

LUDGATE STREET, ST. PAUL'S, March, 1823.

